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# Tournament Casting and the Proper Equipment

*By*

LOU S. DARLING

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*“He laughs best who laughs last”*

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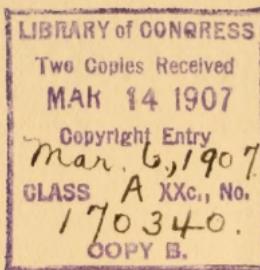
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# Tournament Casting and the Proper Equipment

WITHIN the past few years I have received so many inquiries from friends, patrons and correspondents for instruction on tournament casting and advice as to the proper equipment, that it has led me to put forth this modest little book upon an unsuspecting public.

I have conscientiously tried to treat the various subjects herein in a lucid way without going into minute and confusing detail.

To those who differ with me I can only say in self-defense that each point I claim as proven, I have, at least, worked out to my own satisfaction. To those who agree with me (God send there by many!) I can only add—"more power to your elbow" and may you win many records!

In this work I propose to treat only the various styles of casting as are generally in vogue at the representative tournaments throughout the country. It is impossible,

in some cases, to make conditions, rules, etc., uniform, as the general regulations of the different tournament committees of the several casting clubs vary considerably in style of events, length and weight of rods, time of casting, size and distances of targets, methods of scoring, flies and lures used, etc. This is, of course, greatly to be regretted, for it works great injury to the sport, makes comparisons of different performances often impossible, and leaves the way open for much "claiming" of records. There has lately been formed, however, a National Association of Scientific Angling Clubs, composed of the following representative clubs: The Chicago Fly Casting Club, The Fox River Valley Bait Casting Club, The Grand Rapids Fly Casting Club, The Illinois Bait Casting Club, The Kalamazoo Bait and Fly Casting Club, The Kansas City Bait and Fly Casting Club, The Racine Fly Casting Club, The San Francisco Fly Casting Club and the Angler's Club of New York.

The objects of this association are "to perfect universal rules under which to conduct national or international tournaments, to promote interest in scientific angling through tournament or contest casting, to guard against any evils of professionalism that may possibly arise, to assist in the propagation and protection of game fishes, and influence legislation toward this end, to pro-

mote the appreciation of true amateur sportsmanship among anglers and lend moral support to all moves toward true sportsmanship in all sports, and to promote such social conditions as an incident to the sport of angling." For the benefit of those desiring a wider knowledge concerning the above association I give here the name and address of the Secretary—H. E. Rice, 225 South Peoria Street, Chicago.

From this excerpt of the association's propaganda it will be seen that at last a powerful and combined effort will be made to draft a complete set of *uniform* rules and regulations, governing all tournament contests, which will relegate to the scrap-heap all questionable records and confusing rules. Unfortunately (for myself), I happen to be a member of the despised and "downtrod" professional class, and this bars me from membership in our local club, except as an associate member, who cannot vote and has no voice in the club's meetings. Under the present ruling of the Angler's Club of New York, a "professional" is anyone who is or has been a guide—who teaches or has taught casting for pay—who is or has been engaged in the manufacture or sale of fishing tackle. It is the last clause that "stings" me and, for the life of me, I cannot see why. To my benighted mind it seems that anyone who gives

their constant best thought, study and labor to the production and improvement of the magnificent rods, reels, lines etc., which this sport demands—to say nothing of furthering the game in every way possible—would be more fairly treated if presented with an honorary membership, rather than branded “professional” and thrown “without the breastworks.” However, “they also serve who only stand and wait,” and my greatest and only real regret is that I cannot help along the good cause by actively working for the long needed, long hoped-for uniform rules.

Let us hope that wise counsel will prevail and that another season will see all clubs competing under like conditions, similar events and identical rules—then will the game be fairly started and become, as it should be, the most truly perfect and gentlemanly sport of our day. I give here for information and comparison, the rules governing tournament contests as generally in use by the Angler’s Club of New York and at the indoor tournament held annually (except 1906) at Madison Square Garden, New York, during the Sportsman’s Show, and which I will call “Eastern Rules.”

PLATE I



Fly Casting  
Beginning of the Recovery



## EASTERN RULES

### GENERAL RULES GOVERNING ALL CONTESTS

In all events there shall be a First Prize, Gold Medal; Second Prize, Silver Medal; and Third Prize, Bronze Medal.

RULE 1. All contests shall be governed by two Judges and a Referee. In cases of disagreement, the Referee shall decide.

RULE 2. All persons competing shall pay an entrance fee of \$1.00 for each event.

RULE 3. The order in which the contestants shall cast shall be determined by lot. The contestants must be ready to cast when called upon by the Judges.

RULE 4. Entries may be made any time before the beginning of a contest, but if made after lots have been drawn for place, such entrants must take precedence, except with consent of *all* contestants. Places cannot be exchanged without the consent of all contestants.

RULE 5. The leader and fly or lure in each contest must be intact at the time of record by the Judges, and the length and weight of the rod must be recorded.

RULE 6. After the contestant has taken his place on the stand, which is a platform not more than eighteen inches above the surface of the water, his time shall be counted from the moment he says "ready," and the first cast thereafter shall count. The longest cast during the five minutes succeeding the word "ready," shall be taken as his record for distance.

RULE 7. The rod must be held in one hand, and no rod shall exceed eleven and one-half (11½) feet in length, excepting when otherwise specified. The line must not be weighted.

RULE 8. The barb and point must be removed from all hooks.

RULE 9. Trout flies on hooks no smaller than No. 12, old scale, shall be used, unless otherwise specified. Leaders, which must be of single gut, shall not exceed the length of the rod by more than two feet, unless otherwise specified.

RULE 10. Time will be allowed, in case of accident, to make repairs, at the discretion of the Judges.

RULE 11. The switch style of casting will not be allowed except in the class so devoted to that method.

RULE 12. All difficulties or disputes, arising and not provided for in these rules or the rules governing each contest, shall be referred to the Judges and Referee, whose decision shall be final.

RULE 13. When the method of casting to be employed is specified in the rules governing an event, no other style than that designated will be allowed.

RULE 14. In all events where the weight of the rod is limited, an allowance of three-quarters of an ounce shall be made for the solid metal reel seat, and three-quarters of an ounce for an independent handle, providing such handle and butt joint of the rod are each made with the usual metal ferrule, and the rod, exclusive of the handle, is made in three pieces joined by metal ferrules.

RULE 15. In bait casting, when a contestant shall inadvertently cast while a click is in, the cast shall not be scored or counted. Another cast shall be allowed for same.

Also, when the lure is snapped off in the very act of casting, but not after it has started forward, the cast shall not be scored or counted, and another cast allowed.

RULE 16. The standard for hooks is that of Harrison's Sproat, regular size, old scale.

The following are the rules as generally adopted and in use by the Chicago, Racine, Kalamazoo and other Western clubs.

#### CAPTAIN.

The Captain shall have charge of all contests (subject to the instruction of the Executive Committee). He shall at each contest appoint two Judges, a Referee and a Clerk. He shall allot contestants their respective turns and see that the rods and tackle used conform to the rules of the contest. In his absence a substitute shall be selected by the members present. He shall have charge of all rods, lines, reels and other property belonging to the Club used in contests.

#### RULE I.

All competitors must be members of the Club. All competitions shall be arranged by the Executive Committee. The Captain shall en-

force all its orders. The Referee shall announce each cast as scored to the Clerk at casting point (as per rule). The Judges shall determine the percentage of contestants in accordance with the rules. The Referee shall keep time when necessary and shall keep an account of the delicacy percentage when required. He shall decide cases in which the Judges disagree and all appeals by contestants from the decision of the Judges. He shall interpret the rules in case of any misunderstanding, and shall decide all matters not covered by the rules. The decision of the Referee shall be final except as to a question of interpretation of rules; in such cases contestant shall have right of appeal to the Executive Committee, provided that notice of such appeal be given to the Captain before the close of the day's contest. The Clerk shall see that each contestant is properly registered, keep the score of each contestant as announced by the Referee and shall file with the Secretary the record of the contests as furnished him by the Judges.

#### RULE II.

##### RODS.

All rods used by competitors must be single handed rods and all casting shall be done single handed fair over head only. Rods shall not exceed eleven feet in length, except in the Long Distance Fly event when the weight and length of the rod is not limited. In Events for Distance and Accuracy Fly, Obstacle Fly and Roll (Switch) Casting the weight shall not exceed 8½ ounces. In Events for Accuracy and Delicacy Fly and Light Tackle Fly the weights shall not exceed 5 ounces, but in these two events an allowance of ¾ ounce will be made for solid reel seats of metal (aluminum excepted), rubber, bone, ivory, or celluloid.

#### RULE III.

##### LEADERS, LINES AND REELS.

Competitors may consult their own inclination in choice of reels and lines, but lines must not be knotted or weighted. Leaders must be of single gut and shall not be less than six nor more than nine feet in length. Reels in bait casting events must be free running, with-

out click, drag, brake, spring, or abnormal device or adjustment which will tend to retard the movement of the spool. If tackle breaks at casting point contestant shall have the privilege of another cast. If line parts after casting weight leaves casting point, cast shall be scored 0.

#### RULE IV.

##### FLIES AND CASTING WEIGHTS.

Flies or casting weight used by competitor must be of the kind and style adopted by the Club, and must be approved by the Captain. One fly only shall be used, which shall not be larger than No. 5, and on which the snell shall not exceed six inches in length. Hooks shall be broken at the bend. The casting weights shall be of wood tipped with metal, and must weigh exactly  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce and  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce according to the event. The  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce casting weights are to be  $\frac{1}{2}$  in diameter at their largest point, and the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce casting weights are to be  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch in diameter at their largest point.

#### RULE V.

##### PLATFORM.

All casting shall be done from a platform, the surface of which shall not be more than 18 inches above the water line, except events for Long Distance Bait Casting which shall be cast on the lawn.

#### RULE VI.

##### PRIZES, MEDALS, ETC.

For each season's contest there may be such prizes or medals awarded as the Executive Committee may decide upon. They may be awarded on the basis of highest actual scores for the season, or under such system of "Handicap allowance" as may be determined upon by the Executive Committee, or in any other manner as from time to time is deemed advisable by the Executive Committee. The arrangements, however, for any system of awarding prizes are to be made and members

notified. Under no circumstances shall any contestant be awarded more than one medal or prize except in case of trophy for highest general average or such trophies or prizes as may be given only in special tournaments or contests outside of the regular series of Club contests. In case any contestant wins two medals or prizes under any system in operation he shall be awarded the prize in which his score is highest if actual score alone is considered, or in which his final score, with allowance, is highest if handicap allowance prevails. No contestant shall be eligible for any prize if his dues are in arrears.

**RULE VII.****TIES.**

In case of a tie, contestants shall cast off the tie at such time as may be designated by the Captain. Losers to take next lower place. In casting off a tie, the same handicap allowances to prevail for each contestant as he had in the regular contests in this Event.

**RULE VIII.****ENTRIES AND RE-ENTRIES.**

Members missing any contest may re-enter in same on next scheduled contest day for that event, but not thereafter. Entries for each Club contest will be received until that event for the day is completed, but not thereafter.

The Executive Committee will fix upon days for contests for the ensuing year. The Secretary will send to each member a card or publish in daily papers showing days of contests, hour of beginning, and any special rules that may have been made.

**RULE IX.****IN GENERAL.**

While contests are in progress, members shall not make remarks to the Judges, Referee, or Contestants, or in any way distract their attention. When the Captain calls for the contest, all persons shall withdraw

from the casting platform, and from then on no practising shall be allowed from the platform until after the contest is closed. The Captain shall suspend from the contest for the day any member guilty, in his opinion, of conduct unbecoming a gentleman or sportsman.

### EVENTS.

#### LONG DISTANCE FLY.

Each contestant shall be allowed seven minutes in which to cast for distance. He shall stand upon the platform and make his cast parallel with a buoy line or measuring board upon which shall be marked accurately the points of distance from the platform. The length of cast shall be measured from where buoy line is made fast to the spot reached by the fly. No other than fair over head casting will be permitted.

Should any competitor whip off fly he shall replace it with another one. No cast shall count after Judges have notified the contestant that fly is missing until after fly is replaced. No time allowed for replacing flies or any other accident.

#### DISTANCE AND ACCURACY FLY.

There shall be three 30-inch rings, distant 50, 55 and 60 feet from the edge of the casting platform. There shall be made five (5) casts at each ring. If the fly falls within the ring or on the rim of same the cast shall be considered perfect. For each foot or fraction of a foot outside the ring a demerit of one shall be made. The sum total of such demerits, divided by the number of casts, shall constitute the demerit per cent. The demerit per cent deducted from 100 shall be the percentage. Not more than one minute shall be allowed in which to extend line to 50-foot ring. When the contestant has extended his line and is ready, he shall call "score," and the next cast thereafter shall be counted. When five successive casts have been made at 50-foot ring, the Captain shall announce "next ring." Contestant must then lift his line, and if he so desires can make five "dry casts" before dropping his line at the 50-foot ring. A like procedure will be allowed between the 55 and 60-foot rings. Should contestant whip off his fly at any time after calling "score" he will be allowed to replace

fly and proceed. For this purpose he may "work out" to point where fly was lost, call "score" and resume scoring at point where scoring stopped. The same procedure will be permitted if contestant's line is fouled through no fault of his. No cast shall count after Judges notify contestant that fly is lost.

#### ACCURACY AND DELICACY FLY.

There shall be three 30-inch rings, distant 35, 40 and 45 feet from edge of casting platform, and there shall be made five (5) casts at each ring. If the fly falls within the ring or on the rim, the accuracy shall be considered perfect. For each foot or fraction of a foot outside the ring a demerit of one shall be made. The sum total of such demerits, divided by the number of casts, shall be considered the demerit per cent. The demerit per cent deducted from 100 shall be the accuracy per cent. In addition, there shall be kept an account of delicacy. The delicacy per cent shall be determined by the Judges and the Referee, in manner indicated below.

Contestant will be allowed thirty seconds to extend his line by "dry fly" casting to 35-foot ring. Scoring will begin the first time the fly strikes the water. When contestant has made five (5) casts, Captain will announce "next ring." Contestant must then lift his line and in not less than one nor more than five "dry fly" casts reach the 40-foot ring. Scoring to begin the first time the fly strikes the water. A like procedure shall be followed between the 40 and 45-foot rings. No cast made without a fly shall be scored. If the fly is lost, contestant may replace same, and in not more than five "dry fly" casts resume his scoring. Not more than two "dry fly" casts will be allowed between scoring casts, except between rings, as stated. All casting shall be done from the reel. Contestant will be allowed to start with loose line and leader equal to length of rod, and may strip line but once in every retrieve, and must retrieve last cast. A perfect cast is: (1) Fly to fall by its own weight without a splash. (2) Fly and leader to strike the water in advance of line with minimum disturbance of surface. (3) Retrieve must be made with minimum disturbance of surface. (4) The grace and ease of contestant, his "dry fly" cast, back cast and manner of extending line, shall be scored for style. A demerit shall be scored for each failure to properly ex-

ecute Nos. 1, 2 and 3, and for lack of "style," as outlined in No. 4; and five (5) points shall be deducted for each demerit scored. The total of delicacy demerits, divided by the number of casts, deducted from 100, give the delicacy per cent. The accuracy per cent and the delicacy per cent, added together and divided by two, determine the final percentage.

#### LIGHT TACKLE LONG DISTANCE FLY.

This event will be governed by same conditions that prevail in Event for Long Distance Fly Casting except that rod shall not weigh to exceed five ounces, with an allowance of  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce for solid reel seat, as provided for in Rule II.

#### OBSTACLE FLY CASTING.

There shall be one 30-inch ring, distant 50 feet from the casting point on platform. The obstacle shall consist of two uprights, 6 feet apart, supporting a horizontal bar, 4 feet above the water. Obstacle shall be located directly between the ring and casting point, and 6 feet from center of ring. There shall be five casts made at the ring. If the fly falls within the ring or on the rim thereof after passing under and without striking the obstacle, the cast shall be considered perfect. For each foot or fraction of a foot away from the ring a demerit of one shall be made. If the fly strikes the obstacle a demerit of five shall be made, in addition to the demerit for distance. If the fly hangs on the obstacle a demerit of fifteen shall be made, in addition to demerit for distance. If the fly strikes outside the obstacle, a demerit of ten shall be made in addition to demerit for distance. The sum total of all such demerits, divided by the number of casts, and deducted from 100, shall be the percentage. Contestant shall be allowed thirty seconds to extend his line by "dry fly" casting. Scoring to commence the first time the fly strikes the water. After first cast, contestant may make not to exceed three "dry fly" casts between each scoring cast.

#### ROLL FLY CASTING.

In this Event an obstacle high enough to prevent an overhead cast

PLATE II



Fly Casting  
Finish of the Back Cast



will be erected 20 feet back of the casting point on the platform. Contestant shall cast for distance and will be allowed five minutes in which to make his score. Contestant in starting will be allowed not more than 60 feet of line, including leader, extended beyond tip of rod. General rules for long distance casting to prevail otherwise.

#### DISTANCE AND ACCURACY BAIT CASTING, ONE-HALF OUNCE.

There will be a target provided for this Event with a center or bull's-eye thirty (30) inches in diameter, and so arranged that it can be located at distances of 60, 70, 80, 90 and 100 feet from casting point on platform to exact center of bull's-eye. There shall be made three casts at the target at each of the distances, viz.: fifteen casts in all. If casting weight falls within the 30-inch center, or bull's-eye, the cast shall be considered perfect. For each foot or fraction of a foot away from the 30-inch center a demerit of one shall be made. The sum total of such demerits divided by the number of casts shall be the demerit per cent. The demerit per cent deducted from 100 shall constitute the percentage. In case contestant casts with drag or click, Captain shall call "foul" and contestant shall be allowed another cast. The  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce casting weights provided for in Rule IV shall be used in this Event.

#### DELICACY AND ACCURACY BAIT CASTING, ONE-FOURTH OUNCE

In this Event, the center of the bull's-eye will be located at distances of 60, 65, 70, 75, and 80 feet from casting point on platform. Three casts shall be made at each distance. The casting weights are to be the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce casting provided for in Rule IV. Scoring and other conditions to be the same as for Event for  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce weights.

#### LONG DISTANCE BAIT CASTING, ONE-HALF OUNCE.

The casting in this Event shall be done on a V-shaped court, which is to be laid out as follows: From the casting point two diverging straight lines are to be laid out at an angle which shall cause them to be 30 feet apart at a distance of 100 feet away from the casting point. Diverging lines to be continued indefinitely at the same angle. Contestants each to make five (5) casts, in turn, one cast at a time.

If casting weight falls outside the court, the cast shall be scored 0. Length of cast to be computed from casting point to where weight falls **INSIDE OF COURT**.

The sum total of the five casts in feet, divided by the number of casts, shall be the average and constitute the score of the contestant. All casting to be done from ground level. The casting weights used are to be the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce casting weights provided for in Rule IV. Conditions regarding free running reels and casting with click or drag to prevail in this Event.

Should weight fall inside court and bound out, cast to be scored from where weight first fell.

The longest single cast, **IN COURT**, will be made a matter of record and awarded a prize as noted.

**DELICACY BAIT LONG DISTANCE, ONE-FOURTH OUNCE.**

This Event will be governed by conditions that prevail in foregoing Event except that in this Event the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce casting weight, as provided for in Rule IV, must be used.



**B**Y a comparison of the foregoing rules it will be seen that there are several differences and discrepancies which will allow of considerable adjusting to a uniform standard, and I sincerely hope that this may be speedily accomplished by the Rules Committee of the National Association.

The growth of this popular sport in the last few years has been truly phenomenal and such as to reflect vast credit upon the American sportsman's appreciation of gentlemanly, scientific sport. Besides the larger and more representative clubs of the National Association, numerous smaller clubs—smaller in membership but not in enthusiasm—are everywhere in evidence. Their tournaments, which in former years were but mere small gatherings of club members, their friends and the ever-present "cranks," are now huge affairs of vast interest to the whole angling fraternity and the sporting world in general, looked forward to and prepared for many months in advance.

The attendance, by comparison with other days, is tremendous and one sees all manner of men and women too, among the enthusiastic and interested

spectators, for rich and poor, old and young, wise and callow—all are welded into one homogeneous lump of interested humanity by the magic word—"angling." One meets often the good, gray "old timer," who shakes his head dubiously at many of the new-fangled and "high-falutin" notions, and is prone to discourse at great length on the wonderful qualities of his old Payne, Leonard, Murphy, Mitchell, Chubb, Devine, Thomas, Norris and rods of other famous makers—names ever dear and hallowed to the thoughtful and thankful angler.

The "Noble Order of Irrepressible Cranks" is also everywhere in evidence, for angling, compared to other sports as a hot-bed for the production of this interesting species, has all the rest beaten "four ways from the jack"—and then some. Also is the keen and eager "Young American" very much in the foreground, and I look upon this as one of the healthiest signs for a rapid and prolonged growth of the sport. The aptitude and ability of the younger generation to absorb by watching and listening is a never-ending source of wonder to me, and the questioning and inquisitive youngster of to-day will often be found on the morrow emulating your performances in pretty good style. Indeed, the ability of some of our younger

casters is such as to place them well up in the "second division" and they are always *coming on*—never going back. The West has produced some veritable prodigies whose casting has been close to the "professional" marks while I, personally, know of two young chaps, sons of a famous Lake Hopatcong guide, who can make many of our older casters take a seat pretty well towards the rear. The women, too, besides taking a keen interest in the game and "rooting" hard for their "hubby," big brother or "best young man," have entered the sport as contestants and made a most creditable showing. The West, always progressive and assertive, boasts a team of five women who can defeat any team of men not picked from the best, and the remarkable part of it is they can pretty nearly do it. Then, too, the makers of and dealers in fishing tackle will be found always "on deck," keenly alive to the situation and ever on the lookout for new ideas to spring later upon some less wide-awake rival. These same men and their interested representatives may be seen at every meet, making friends among the novices by timely advice, chaffing and "knocking" each other good-naturedly, and ever ready to assist and help along the proverbially over-worked and fretful "committee." Much of the success of modern

tournament casting in this country is due to the steady interest and untiring work of many of these men, as is also the wonderful perfection of rods, reels, lines, etc., which they have produced after tiresome and costly experiments.

I can remember very well my introduction to the game. I was watching one of the contests at the Sportsman's Show in New York—it was one of the middle-distance fly casting events—and remarked to a friend standing by me—"I think I could beat some of those chaps myself." His reply, naturally enough, was—"why don't you try it?" This set me thinking, and I finally made up my mind to do it. I was absolutely green at the game and had no idea of what was the proper tackle to use, but I laid hold of a faithful old rod and entered the next event which was, I believe, the 75 foot class—that is, an event open to all who had never cast a greater distance in any tournament contest. I failed to cover myself with glory in this, my first attempt, but while I finished as an "also ran" I did defeat several of the other contestants, and was fairly "stung" by the microbe of tournament casting, and became an enthusiastic follower of the sport from the hour. The next day I started out to get some standard book on the subject to read up and

study, and was sorely disappointed when I was unable to find one. So I did the next best thing I could think of and that was to find out who the best casters were and observe them. For many days after that I played the role of "rail-bird" and kept as close a watch as possible upon the experts in practice and in contest. I observed as far as possible the general build and action of their rods, the sizes and styles of their lines, the lengths of leaders, their methods of casting and retrieving the line, etc. I became acquainted with some of them and asked, I fear, many questions which were considered prying to say the least.

Little good the questions did me, however, for I soon found, as I might have guessed, that Mr. Expert was not willing to give away any of the tricks and secrets of the game, if he could help it, and it was up to me to find out and learn what I could for myself. Before the tournament was over I had about settled in my mind the kind of rod I wanted, and soon had three started—a 4-ounce, a 5-ounce and a 9-ounce.

They were long in coming and the summer was gone before I received them, to my great regret, for I had hoped to be able to work out the perplexing question of a line by practise. While I had no chance

PLATE III



Fly Casting  
The Forward "Drive"



for out-door practise I lost no time when the next tournament at the Sportsman's Show came around and as soon as the doors opened I was busy in the big tank.

I soon found, by the rarest of good fortune, that my three rods were magnificent and veritable wonders of casting power. I had, in the meantime, been doing some theoretical work on the proper lines and great was my delight to find I was not far wrong.

After considerable experimenting in the early morning, and by numerous bends and splices I got my lines balanced about right and started to practice as if my life depended upon the successful outcome. My hopes were more than realized, and at the end of the tournament—two weeks—I had scored in 15 events, winning among others the championship events for the 4-ounce rod and the heavy rod.

Although one may, in a measure, be "to the manner born," yet it requires much careful thinking out of puzzling "little things" and plenty of hard, conscientious work before the newcomer at the game can hope to land in the coveted "first division" and line up in the open events. Still, there is no question in the minds of everyone but that there are many modest fishermen who would shine in most any tournament

event, could they but be induced to make a try. To all such as may be interested and are held back by fear of "making a fool of themselves" I beg them to profit by my example and have a try at this exciting and keenly interesting, gentlemanly sport. At the same time I must sound this fair warning. If you *do* make a start, you are absolutely certain to be "stung" by the casting microbe and the tournament fever soon runs riot in your system—nor is there any known cure at the present time.

The fascination of bait-casting is particularly alluring, and the most deadly in its action after it has once laid hold of one. Each time a cast is made, to result maybe in a miserable fizzle, in your delirium, you fancy an elfin voice whispering at your ear—"the *next* cast will do it." And so you reel and cast, reel and cast—each cast of more interest than the one before, until the day, never long enough, has slipped away ere you noticed it. I know a most genial gentleman who came to watch a bait-casting event at a tournament for the first time. He was an expert fly fisherman, but knew nothing of the beautiful grace and precision of the overhead bait cast. After watching the event he was so taken with it, that he asked a competitor if he might try a few casts. After

a few disastrous trials he made, to his great delight, a fairly good cast. That settled it for him! The next day he purchased a tournament rod, reel and casting line of the best make and hurried home. When his wife returned in the afternoon she was amazed to find this staid old fisherman seated upon the floor of their long drawing-room, totally oblivious of his surroundings, and casting away for dear life at an old opera hat in a far corner.

I could mention many other incidents of a like sort to show what a hold the sport takes upon one, which all goes to prove the engrossing interest of the game.

Probably the most interesting phase of tournament casting is the indoor meets at the New York Sportsman's Show, usually held during the last of February or first of March in Madison Square Garden.

Owing to the season of the year any preparatory practise is practically out of the question and the caster, who usually has time and opportunity at his disposal for practise, must meet, for once, on more nearly equal terms with the busy city man. Here it is more a contest of natural strength and skill, together with a knowledge of the finer points and "tricks of the trade," than the outdoor

contest, which, for the reasons above stated, work to the disadvantage of the busy man.

Then, too, everyone casts under more equal conditions and no competitor is aided by some favoring puff of wind.

The scores, of course, are rarely, if ever, as good as in the outdoor events, for it is manifestly harder to cast as far in *dead* air as in *live* air—the latter has a great buoying-up effect upon a line, to say nothing of a lucky cast being caught at the critical moment and helped along by a favoring puff of wind.

Before we take up a description of the various events let us have a little word in general upon equipment. Right here I want to go on record as saying that this is no place for the beginner to save money by employing *anything* of the “just as good” order. I know of many good fishermen who are content to rub along with the most reprehensible kit of fishing traps, apparently, they were able to secure and yet give a good account of themselves after a day’s fishing. Some men *do*, as a matter of fact, take pride in the possession of a lot of battered fishing gear and who have a holy horror of anything appearing at all new or up-to-date.

Bear in mind that the strain upon all tackle in this

game is far beyond that of any tactics employed in actual fishing.

Each and every article should be most carefully selected for its particular purpose and it should be tried and true or it will surely fail you at some critical moment.

We will take up first the oldest and most time-honored branch of the sport—the most kingly sport of all.



## Casting With the Fly Rod

The remarks made above in reference to the quality and fitness of your tackle applies more particularly to your rod than anything else.

My most earnest advice is to *get the best you can buy*. The everyday fisherman and the average caster has no idea of the really terrific strain the rod is called upon to bear in this game. Not only are the lines usually employed by expert distance casters far heavier than those in use by fishermen, but, by extending and retrieving the line to the utmost limit of your power and ability you are constantly forcing the rod to its last fibre of strength from tip-top to butt-cap. This is not the slow, gentle cast by which you are wont to flick your flies lightly over some quiet pool or lake, but a thrashing, smashing, driving cast that will hurl a heavy line the greatest possible distance your strength and skill can attain.

Few rods will endure this fibre-racking strain for any length of time and still preserve their power and resiliency—it is only the “exceptions” which will stand the racket and keep their “life” after a few seasons of tour-

nament work. One can readily see, therefore, that this is pre-eminently a case of where "the best is none too good," while the failure of the "just as good" kinds is, without question, a foregone conclusion.

I am a patriotic American and I am glad to be able to say that the best rods, comparing "speed" and power to weight and length, are made in this country—our English cousins to the contrary notwithstanding. This is especially true of the lighter rods, where the English are hopelessly outclassed, for our best makers long ago hit upon the knack of "hang" or balance, which the English rods still lack.

No one will gainsay but that the English turn out some fine specimens of work, for many of their rods, especially the "double-built" with steel center, are most clever examples of the rodmaker's art, but I have yet to see one used where a far lighter American rod would not do the same work and do it better. Even in this country, however, there are really but two expert makers of tournament rods, and it goes without saying that their creations are marvels of strength, "speed" and exquisite workmanship. Tournament rods, made especially for the purpose, are built on radically different lines from the usual type of a rod made for fishing. The average angler, when handling one of these rods for the first time,

PLATE IV



Fly Casting  
"The Shoot"



will be amazed at their "speed," strength and driving power which, by comparison, will make some old favorite of his seem a veritable "limpy-go-fetch-it." Both makers referred to follow widely different theories in the designing and construction of their rods. One follows the principle that a very heavy middle-joint and tip is necessary to properly retrieve a long line cleanly and to "kick" it out well behind on the back cast. The other claims that all the "lifting" can be done with the butt of the rod and that the greatest need is power for the sharp "drive" of the forward cast, so he uses a moderate middle and puts a tremendous driving power in the butt.

Both makes have proved successful in different hands, and the question of superiority is still a hotly debated point among their many adherents.

Personally, I much prefer the last mentioned style, although the perfect rod is probably a proper combination of both. It is a hard and almost impossible job for the tyro to pick out a proper rod for tournament work and he would do far better by putting himself in the hands of some one "in the know" or follow the advice of any reputable dealer who makes a specialty of these rods.

It is sufficient to say here that they should be stiff and powerful and have a quick, snappy action, so that when whipped sharply forward and the butt held steady, they

will spring back instantly. Large sized "snake" guides will be found the best and there should be a large agate "hand" guide, (the first guide) placed fairly close to the top of the butt joint. Many expert casters use, especially on the heavy rods, an extension handle built out from 4 to 8 inches below the reel-seat.

This is so managed that in recovering the line the long handle is held in position under the forearm and affords considerable more power in the retrieve by reason of the leverage obtained. (See Plate 9.) It is, however, somewhat difficult to manage and is not in general use, but I find it a great aid and use it on all heavy rods.

In fly casting events for distance there are three classes —4-ounce rods, 5-ounce rods and "unlimited" or heavy rods. The "unlimited" rods may be of any weight elected by the user, the only restriction being that they must not exceed 11 or  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length, as the case may be.

In the case of the 4 and 5-ounce rods it is usual to make an allowance of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an ounce if the rods be made with a solid metal reel-seat (aluminum barred), so a rod of this description may weigh 4 $\frac{3}{4}$  or 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  ounces and still be eligible.

This rule was drafted to prevent the more wealthy casters and the crafty "professional" from employing rods with skeleton reel-seats, or none at all, to the great

disadvantage of the caster using a rod with a heavy metal seat.

It is obvious that by reason of being able to save the weight of the reel-seat, and put the same weight *into the rod*, that a much more powerful rod would result. An old rule used to allow an additional  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an ounce for an "independent" handle, but this has been generally discontinued.

Having selected a rod we now come to the line. Here our English friends turn the tables upon us and have it all their own way.

While we make some very beautiful lines in this country it is certain that nothing can compare with the English soft enamel line for this purpose. Not only are they heavier than the hard enamel American lines, but they are far more flexible and do not kink.

Their tapers are also much longer and more evenly balanced as a rule and they will outwear other lines two to one. Their one great objection is their cost—they run up as high as 20c. per yard—but they more than make up for it in their durability and beautiful handling.

As mentioned before the lines used for tournament work are much heavier than those employed in fishing, for with the heavier line longer casts are possible and the line is more easily controlled. Of course, the line

should be suited to and match the rod in order that both may work evenly together to the maximum of efficiency. This I have always found an extremely difficult thing to bring about and perfection is only arrived at after much practise and careful experimenting.

While there is no general rule to apply which would guide one safely in the selection of a certain sized line for a certain weight rod, yet the following pairing of rod and line will be found fairly accurate in the main.

As a rule the "unlimited" rods, weighing from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 9 ounces, should take a line running from No. A to No. 4 Salmon, (English sizes) in the center, while for the lighter rods No. 3 or Letter C for the 4-ounce and No. 5 or Letter B for the 5-ounce will be about right. It is well to state here that line sizes are confusing in the extreme as all English makers do not conform to their own standard of sizes which, in turn, is much different from ours—the English "A" being about the size of our "D." The tapers should be evenly balanced and long on both ends of the line, but no rule can be applied here as so much depends upon the way in which the cast is handled.

If the caster employs a long, "slow" cast, carrying the line well out in the air, a fairly light line with very long front taper is essential, but the "fast" caster depends

upon the "rolling loop" and requires a line with very heavy center and moderate taper in front.

Considerable experimenting has been done with the so-called "whip-lash" line but as yet it has found little favor. This line runs from a fine front taper, steadily increasing in size, until it reaches the maximum at a length of about 80 feet. It then tapers off sharply in the next few feet and runs the balance of its length in size H or I, which are the smallest made. The theory of this line is to obtain the maximum in the "shoot" by virtue of the very light back line.

The great drawback to its use is that one must get the distance just right from the front to where the heavy line stops, which should be about the full length of line you are able to retrieve. If the heavy line be too short and the light back line is allowed to work out through the guides *before* the "shoot," the result will be that your cast is "killed" instantly.

Expert casters as a rule use lines which they have "spliced" by hand of several different sizes, thus working out to their own satisfaction the proper weight and size of the center, length of front and back tapers, etc., as best suited to some particular rod or their own peculiar manner of casting.

If you, dear reader, should try this and succeed in

producing a satisfactory line, do not fail to note *exactly* the length and size of each part so it can be duplicated when desired. I once lost an important match on account of losing the whole front taper of my favorite line at practise two days before the match and, as I had neglected to note and preserve the dimensions of the line, I was reduced to guess-work as I had no further opportunity for practise.

I have been working steadily for over a year to perfect a line for the "rolling loop" style of casting for all three weights of rods—4-ounce, 5-ounce and "unlimited." It is the most ticklish and exasperating thing I have ever attempted and I have not succeeded yet in getting just what I consider right for the heavy rods, although I have been more fortunate with the light rods and have a line for these which I do not believe can be improved upon. At the time I am writing this I have just received from England the samples of my latest attempt at the perfection of the heavy line and regret exceedingly, owing to the inclement weather, that I have been unable to test it and set forth the results here. I will say, however, that this line embodies all the good features of previous "trials," with all the failures eliminated, and I expect and hope for great things of it. If this line proves to be right I will be able to duplicate it in quantity as each di-

mension has been carefully worked out and the size recorded.

One is of the regulation double-tapered pattern and the other is a new application of the "whip-lash" idea. I expect to try out both thoroughly at the coming Sportsman's Show in New York and will be glad to advise any casters particularly interested in the result. It is well to note here that the line for indoor casting should have a shorter and heavier front taper than a line for outdoor casting as in the indoor casting you have no "live" air to help buoy up the line and no favoring breeze to catch and extend a long, light front taper. Leaders also play an important part, which should not be overlooked in the equipment. They should be tapered from very heavy gut (salmon) next to the line to a medium weight to gut at the end. The idea of this is to carry out the front taper still further without adding weight—the gut being much lighter than the line. In some events the lengths of leaders are restricted—see Rule 3 of Western Rules and Rule 9 of Eastern Rules—but where the length is unrestricted, experts use them of all lengths up to 20 feet. For use with the heavy rod my favorite leader is 18 feet in length and is composed of 9 feet heavy salmon gut, 6 feet heavy bass gut and 3 feet medium trout gut. It is better to have the leader knotted for its full length

and not two or more leaders joined together by loops. In distance casting the leader must stand a lot of whipping and snapping and it is well to get a good quality and be careful to soak it thoroughly before using. In some cases the flies to be used will be furnished by the tournament committee but the caster should always be well supplied himself. The ordinary snelled fly is useless as it will almost immediately be whipped off. Nothing is more annoying or disconcerting to one than, just as you have worked out your line to the point where you are ready for the final "shoot," to hear the judges sing out—"fly off!" and be compelled to pull in your line and do it all over again, to say nothing of time and muscle lost. The smallest size permitted is No. 12 Sproat, old scale, and the best style is the metal eye or gut loop as they do not snap off easily. I prefer a fly made with a loop of heavy *single* gut—the loop  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch long. This is superior to the metal eyed hook as it does not cut through the loop or end of your leader and does not rot the leader with rust if allowed to dry on the leader after using.

We now have our equipment for fly casting completed and are ready to step up on the platform and cast. Now is the time to remember things and, whatever you do, *don't hurry*. Keep cool and take plenty of time to see that everything is in proper shape and order before

PLATE V



Bait Casting  
Position at Start of Cast



starting in. The usual period of time allowed each contestant for casting varies from 5 to 7 minutes, accordingly as time is or is not allowed to repair accidents, etc. Usually your best work will be done in the first few minutes of casting but, nevertheless, take your time and remember that fluster and hurry is not only apt to get one "rattled" but will surely subtract a lot from your nervous strength. First arrange your line as follows: If you keep your line on a reel, pull it all off. Throw it in loose coils at the right side of the platform. Place the reel well behind you on your right side or, better still, remove it from the platform altogether. (The reel is seldom used on the rod.) Now re-coil your line from the right to the left side of the platform, throwing it in larger loose coils so as to reduce the possibility of kinks and "rat-nests" to a minimum.

By this method of coiling your line it pays out freely in the "shoot" as it always runs from the *top* of the coil and is far less likely to catch up a loop and snarl. Look about to see if there be any splinters in the platform, loose trash, etc., about to catch the line and impede the "shoot"—this is why the reel should be removed from the platform. If you find that preceding casters have tracked up any considerable amount of dirt, sand, etc., on the platform, get a broom or some convenient article and

sweep it off, for if you don't the grit is apt to cut and ruin your line. Now set up your rod and be careful to seat all ferrules tight. Run the line through the guides and attach the leader and fly, which have both been thoroughly soaked. Take your position in the center of the platform, with the right foot forward, and the coiled line lying to your left and a little *behind* you. (If left-handed reverse the position.)

Now, suppose you are casting in the 100 foot class and the greatest amount of line you are able to retrieve is 85 feet and you will depend upon the "shoot" for any distance attained beyond that mark. Locate well the position of the 85 foot mark and keep your eye fixed upon it as much as possible to aid you in determining upon the right moment to "shoot" your line. If the event be out of doors notice carefully the direction and strength of the wind and cast in such way as to obtain all the benefit possible.

After the judges have inspected your fly and pronounced it correct, grasp your rod firmly, with the thumb on top and pointing up the rod (See Plate 9), and hold the slack line in your left hand.

Now begin to extend the line slowly, at each forward cast allowing the slack line to run through the fingers as long as it will "pull," but do not allow the slack line

to run until the "live" line has fairly started forward. This is what is called the "shoot" and while it is difficult to master, it is absolutely essential to long-distance casting.

At the end of each cast, before recovering, pull in with the left hand enough slack to straighten the line in the water and *set it in motion toward you*. At the same instant swing your body forward, so that the weight is on the right foot, extend the rod to your full reach, keeping it about parallel with water (See Plate I), and recover the line *smartly*. Do not allow your line to settle deep in the water or you will have great difficulty in recovering it—after the line has been fairly extended and struck the water for the greater part of its length you *cannot recover too quickly*. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of the recovery for upon it rests the success of your forward cast. You *cannot* make a good forward cast unless your back cast is straight and taut. The best casters use every effort to obtain a "high back line"—that is, at the finish of the back cast the line will all be *straight* out in the air and the fly high up, so that on the forward cast it will not flick the water or foul any obstruction. In order to obtain a perfect back line the caster must study all the moves carefully and learn to do, practically, several

things at the same time. Remember that at the beginning of the recovery the line should be in motion toward you so that somewhat of the dead weight is saved in the "lift." While the rod should be extended well forward it should not be so far as to destroy the poise of the body, which should be perfectly balanced upon the right foot so as to throw the weight of the body back with the rod on the retrieve. The rod should be so held that it forms a straight line with the extended arm, the thumb on top and parallel with the rod and the wrist bent downward. In both the forward and backward motion the arm should move in a line as nearly vertical as possible and not out at the side—a good way to perfect your style is to practise casting with your elbow held close to your side. As soon as the line has been set in motion toward you, by the pull of the left hand, the recovery begins with a *simultaneous* lift with the rod by the muscles of the legs, back and forearm *only*.

The wrist is still held in the downward position, and the upperarm and shoulder have yet their work to do. When the rod reaches an angle of about 50 degrees from the water the upper-arm and shoulder take up the work and when the rod has almost reached a vertical position the movement is completed by a *sharp* upward and backward *snap* of the wrist.

This last motion is the finishing touch, and makes the perfect back cast, but care must be taken that the rod is not allowed to go more than about 15 degrees beyond the vertical (See Plate 2).

This is very important for if the rod is allowed to go further back you will be almost certain to get a "bag" of slack in your back line, which will effectually kill your cast, as it is perfectly obvious that all slack must be taken up before any power can be applied for the forward cast. If you get this slack behind you—you will soon learn to tell by the feel of the rod—pull in a little line with the left hand before starting the rod forward. As you finish the movement of the back cast let the shoulder go well back with the rod, so that you will have all the forward sweep possible, but do not let the tip sag behind. Practise this steadily with a medium length of line until you get the "hang" of it, watching each cast behind by turning the head, and keep it up until you obtain a straight, taut, high back cast. (I remember once hearing an old-time Irish salmon fisherman say that a back cast should go out behind so straight and stiff that a "bird could perch upon it!") As your body, too, has been swung back with the rod your weight is now on the left foot, the body inclined a little backward, the

arm raised so that the elbow is on a level with or a trifle above the shoulder, the forearm nearly vertical and the wrist bent backward. Now we come to the forward cast. To obtain the best results in the forward drive, the power must be applied, not only in the right way, but *at the right time*.

This sounds difficult and let me tell you it *is* difficult, and no mistake, for in order to do this properly one must judge and *time* the back cast to such a nicety that the forward motion shall begin *just* as the fly is *fully* extended behind.

Those casters who are musicians, or who have a good "ear" for music, usually acquire this act more readily, as they are able to time the back cast by musical rythm. Failing in this, the best plan is, after you have completed the motion of the back cast, to move the rod forward a trifle until it is *vertical*, and hold it there until you feel the first pull of the line against the tip of the rod, and then let the rod go back again *just a little* to pick up any slack caused by the subsequent "kick" of the line. Now the best forward cast is obtained by the "rooling loop." In order to do this the line cannot be cast slowly, but must be *driven* quickly forward and with great force. This causes the "belly," or heavy center of the line,

to be driven forward in advance of the lighter taper, and in the shape of a long loop, with the heavy line below and the leader and fly on top.

This loop unrolls upon itself as it flies through the air, the momentum of the heavy "belly" drawing after it from 5 to 20 feet of the fine back taper in the "shoot," and the whole line straightens out and settles down gracefully to the full extent of the cast, never "checking" and jerking back the fly as is so often the case in the slow straight cast.

To make this cast, at the very instant that the fly is fully extended behind, let the rod go back just a little (keeping it nearly vertical) to take up any slack caused by the "kick" of the line as mentioned before. Instantly start the rod forward by a *simultaneous* movement of the body, shoulder and upper arm, accelerating the movement until the rod reaches a position *slightly* in advance of the vertical, when the forearm and wrist come into play (See Plate 3). In the second movement—wrist and forearm—*put all the power you possess*, and bring your rod forward and down with a veritable *crash*, finishing with the sharpest *wrist snap* you are capable of. Meanwhile you should have imparted to the *butt* of the rod a forward or pushing motion which is finished (just as you give the wrist snap) by pulling

the *handle* of the rod sharply downward and toward you. This is the great secret of the cast and where and why so many tyros fail. The explanation is quite simple. The forward or pushing movement of the butt gives you more time during the forward cast in which to apply power to the rod. The effect of the pulling downward and inward of the handle at the finish of the wrist snap is to cause the tip of the rod to spring forward much more smartly than if the hand were allowed to go forward to the full reach of the arm. I find this particular movement somewhat difficult to describe in such manner that it cannot be misunderstood, but I trust I have made my meaning plain enough for the beginner to grasp the idea and work it out in practise. It is best to practise the different movements separately until the correct "style" is attained and then gradually work them into *one extended motion*, which it should be. In both casting and recovering, keep the rod and arm in as straight a line with each other as possible—never let the cast sway to the side. Work your line out, cast by cast, as far as you can recover it *cleanly*, which will be practically the limit of your straight cast, and then prepare for the final "shoot."

If, as you start your forward cast for this last effort, you do not feel a good hard "pull" from the line behind

you, do not "shoot" the line but instead pull in a little slack with the left hand and try again. Keep this up until as you start your rod forward you feel that you have a good "live" line behind—that is, a good hard pull from the back line. Then, just as your loop shoots forward (as you finish the wrist snap), let go of the slack line held in the left hand, hold the rod low and the line will run out clean and true in the "shoot" (See Plate 4).

If, in recovering the line you find you have attempted too much or made an awkward move, and the line comes back all wabbly and slack, do not try to thrash it out, but pull in slack quickly with the left hand and start over. Those who have mastered the "switch cast," which I will describe later, will find it a great aid at such times. If the event be one in which the judges will allow the caster time in case of accidents, such as whipping off a fly, parting your leader, etc., and you find yourself suddenly in this fix—*don't hurry*, but take your time and don't get flustered. Call "time" and then *take time* to fix things up in good shape again before you start in. Remember that your casting time is never taken until *you* give the word "ready," so *don't* give it until you *are* ready. If your cast should fall foul of some obstacle, don't yank at it—call "time" at once and let

someone remove it for you. By yanking at it you are likely to part a valuable leader or tear off the front taper of your pet line. If you hear your line snap and crack behind you on the back cast, call "time" and pull in—you will find your fly whipped off or your leader gone. If you find yourself rapidly tiring in the middle of an event you might as well quit—you can do nothing with tired muscles and may lame yourself for the next event.

Few people have any idea of the tremendous effort necessary to lift and retrieve a long line from the water and cast it forward again (until they try it) for it all looks so delightfully simple and easy. When one realizes, however, that you put into the effort every ounce of strength you possess it has a different aspect.

The method of handling the lighter rods of the four and five-ounce classes differs but little in a general way. Of course you do not require or use as much force and more work is done by the wrist and fore-arm than in the case of the heavy rod, the wrist snap being the real crux in all forms of fly casting. As the lines are lighter you cannot "shoot" as far or as well, but it is done to great advantage in all styles of casting.

The leaders are also shorter and lighter as they have less weight and length of line to balance in the forward

taper. You will find it to advantage to wrap the handle of your rod with some material affording a good firm grasp, and if your handle be at all thin, to build it out so you can get a good hold without cramping the hand. I prefer to use plain white cotton twine—it is very soft, gives a fine grip and soaks up instantly any water or moisture on the hands which might cause a slip. If you use the extension handle you will find it a good plan to wrap that part with okonite, tire tape or soft rubber bands—this will go to prevent any side slip of the handle in casting. Watch your rod carefully for strains, loose ferrules, etc., and touch up immediately any places where the varnish has become scratched or broken. Take particular pains in the care of your line and keep it as straight as possible. Wipe it off with a piece of chamois or soft linen each time you use it, and don't keep it on a reel with a small spool. Get one of the larger wooden reels for sale at any tackle store—the larger the better—and *reel* your line on easily, not tight. *Never* put it on a reel or anything else by winding it around and around with the hand. By doing this you throw a kink into the line at every turn, and later on there will be the deuce to pay.

If your line should become kinky from this or other causes get it straight again as soon as you can. If you

are conveniently near a lake or fast-running stream your task is easy.

Let all the line run down stream in some place where the water runs swiftly, and hold it there for 5 or 10 minutes—the kink will disappear. If on a lake, let all the line out behind a boat and tow it for a few hundred yards—it will have the same effect as the stream. If you have neither time nor opportunity for either of the foregoing methods you can do well by making one end fast and drawing the line through the fingers, keeping a firm pressure always on the line. Do this several times, always working from the *same end* and not going back and forth—not even in polishing—and then, if you possibly can, stretch the line good and hard. The line should be dressed with deer fat each time it is used, to keep it soft and flexible and preserve it. It should then be rubbed down several times with the fingers, and polished with a bit of chamois or soft leather dipped in powdered graphite. A line so treated will *never* become sticky and will always remain soft and limber. The line should always be dressed and polished from the front end toward the back, so that all loose strands, cracks in the enamel, splice wrappings, etc. will be filled up and offer the least possible resistance when running through the guides.

If you graphite your lines you are sure to get more or less of it on your hands and clothes in casting, but this is of little moment compared to the benefit it is to the line. A good trick with leaders is to soak them thoroughly and then stretch them taut between two nails on a board (use brass or copper pins to avoid rust).

When dry, coil loosely without twisting and tie the coils with a bit of tape or keep in as large a box as convenient—a leader so treated will become straight instantly when again wetted. If you find it necessary to straighten a dry leader in a hurry it can be done by having someone hold one end, or by making it fast, and then rubbing it back and forth rapidly with a piece of rubber or soft leather.



## Bait Casting From the Reel

This branch of the sport is by far the most widespread, and its followers, in the sense of tournament casting, probably outnumber the fly casters by ten to one. Throughout the West it is as popular and attracts as much attention as baseball, and its enthusiastic devotees are legion. It is to the Westerners we owe the development of the sport to its present standard of perfection. They hold practically all records in bait casting, except indoors, and in point of numbers of expert casters have the East hopelessly outclassed. While we have in the East some casters who can always be depended upon to give a good account of themselves and are to be feared in any tournament contest, for each one the West can produce a score, to say nothing of many women who are by no means mean antagonists.

Through the Middle West, the home of bait casting, there are but few trout streams, and their bass, pickerel and "muskys" are not especially partial to the fly. Mr. Westerner was, therefore, compelled to bait-fish perforce and, owing to the vast number of weedy lakes and

ponds which were generally his fishing grounds, he was obliged to find a way to cast straight and true. The old style "side cast," with which all old-timers are familiar, would not do. This cast was made by a wide sweep of the rod, which was held approximately at right angles to the body, and was found in the main to be too inaccurate and uncertain. It also required a longer rod and more room than was often convenient, and another way had to be found.

So Mr. Westerner, always progressive, put on his "thinking cap" and evolved the short rod and the overhead cast. This solved all questions, and at once jumped into popular favor. It was light, easy to carry, powerful in action and, in practised hands, the minnow, frog or artificial bait could be cast almost as accurately as desired. As the overhead cast is the only one now recognized in tournament casting from the reel, we will deal with it alone. The best rods for tournament work are without question those made in one piece, although some prefer the jointed rods on account of their greater handiness to carry.

While the one piece rods are admittedly awkward and unhandy to carry about on account of their length, to both the angler and the tournament caster they more

than make up for this by their beautiful action and casting quality.

Split bamboo again is the chosen favorite by an overwhelming majority, although one may find lancewood, greenheart and other solid wood rods in the hands of experts at any tournament.

The handles, generally made in independent fashion—that is, separate from the rod—are to be found in every variety of size, shape, style of grasp, etc., according to one's individual fancy.

The length of the rod is still a vexed and much discussed question—the lengths used by Eastern and Western experts running all the way from  $6\frac{1}{2}$  down to less than 4 feet long.

Probably the standard length—for split bamboo—will work itself out somewhere around 5 feet over all (including handle) and it is quite likely that future tournaments will have classes for bait casting when the rods, as in fly casting, will be restricted to certain weights or lengths. I must admit that, at the present time, the proper length is still unsettled to my own satisfaction but my present choice is a one-piece split bamboo, measuring  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet over all and weighing, without the handle, 3 ounces. (This is for the  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce weight.)

The handle, of my own designing, is of the larger grasp

pattern, with hand grasp of sumach wood and forward grasp of cork. The hand grasp is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and the forward grasp 1 inch in diameter and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. The reel-seat,  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches long, is sunk into the handle so that the upper edge or shoulder of the hand grasp makes a perfect finger hold which, to my mind, is far superior to the finger-hook often seen in the West. The reel-seat is fitted with a patent locking reel band which is worth its weight in gold for, by a turn or two of the band, I can lock the reel on the rod so tightly it cannot possibly work loose in casting, which is a common annoyance with the old style band. Many do not care for the forward grasp and, while it is unnecessary, it will always be found a great help and convenience when reeling in the line or when playing a fish. The guides should be of fairly large diameter and, to insure wear, should be of agate or steel.

The ordinary German silver guides are too soft and are soon worn and cut into grooves and ridges by the line.

There has been much talk among casters for years concerning the pattern and style of guide best suited for casting rods and affording the least amount of friction—and they are still talking about it. Personally, I think the amount of friction developed by a line running

through a guide at high speed is too infinitesimal to consider.

But, where there *is* friction is in a wet line dragging along the length of the rod.

Every angler knows how persistently a wet line will stick and cling to a rod, especially if the line be a soft braided one, and for this reason the guides should be set well up on the rod and the tip-top should be offset, so that the line, in running out, passes free from guide to guide and does not touch the rod.

Bait casting, as conducted at practically all tournaments, is for both distance and accuracy, with  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce weights of special pattern.

Generall speaking, the rods used for the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce events are fairly short and stiff.

They should have a quick, snappy action and be so balanced that when whipped sharply they will spring back instantly and *stay there*.

By this I mean that when a cast is made the rod should not spring in a big bow but have a short, sharp drive and at the finish of the movement should spring back immediately and remain rigid and not quiver and vibrate—this interferes seriously with the proper out-running of the line.

My idea of a perfect rod is one that will “play” all its

length *evenly* and has the "drive," or casting action, at or near the junction of the rod and handle. In this rod the tip is heavier in proportion to the butt than in the usual pattern and it has these two very distinct advantages. As the whole rod springs into action at the cast it is possible to apply more power with less "elbow grease" than with any other form and at the finish of the cast it springs back instantly to a rigid position and remains so, allowing the line to run out straight and true.

For the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce and accuracy events the rod should be a little longer and more pliable, for here the caster, on account of the lighter weight in use, has to depend more upon the spring of the rod. With the longer rod it is also easier to get a good "line" on the target in accuracy casting and the cast is more easily controlled.

The strain upon the rods is severe and it behooves the caster to get a good one if he expects it to stand the racket. Dealers who make a specialty of catering to the wants and needs of tournament casters usually make and keep a line of rods built especially for the purpose and it is only fair to suppose they should be far superior in "speed" and casting power to the rods made for ordinary fishing purposes.

The next thing is the selection of a reel. If you are blessed (?) by having several friends who are tournament

casters—God help you! To listen to them all and then decide upon a reel will tax both your reasoning powers and your patience to the utmost. If you undertake to consult them all you must not forget that all casters are full fledged members of good standing in the “Noble Order of Cranks” and that every caster’s reel, like his “best girl,” his dog and his favorite pipe is the “best ever” and no amount of arguments will shake his opinion. If you have formed no positive opinion on the subject yourself, my advice is to ask, if possible, some *one* caster whom you have fair reason to believe understands the subject and abide by his decision.

It is generally conceded that the Talbot or Meek reels stand for all that is excellence in workmanship, easy-running and wearing qualities and their creations hold practically all records.

There are, of course, many other good makes which will be found satisfactory in a measure and one has a long line of such reels to select from, running in price all the way from \$5.00 to \$60.00.

Many people question the seemingly high price of fine reels without stopping to consider the amount of skilled labor and hand work in their construction. When one realizes that the bearings and working parts of fine reels

are as carefully made and fitted as those of a watch, the prices asked seem very reasonable.

The drilling and fitting into reels of jewels for end-bearings, pinions, etc., is in itself a fine art and calls for the highest grade of skilled labor and one realizes what perfect workmanship is attained when the degree of variation allowed is less than one-thousandth part of a centimeter. My advice to the beginner is, no matter what kind of rod you may select, to "let out" when it comes to getting a reel and buy one of the best.

By all means get one with jeweled bearings, if you can afford it, for they will outwear many times any steel and bronze bearings and are nearly frictionless. Beware, however, if any of the so-called "jewelled" reels which have only "cap jewels." These are a perfect sham and are only made to sell. As a rule they are mere bits of agate, garnets or colored glass *set in caps* which screw on and are no more benefit to the reel than two handles would be—except for the possible decorative effect and the extra price. See that the bearings are what is known as "hole jewels" and they should be of corundum or sapphires.

These jewels are set solidly into the frame of the reel, or in separate "collars," and have carefully drilled holes let in to take the fine steel ends of the axle, pinion and

other working parts and make practically frictionless and indestructible journals. Unfortunately there is no generally accepted standard of reel as to size, length of spool etc., to which the tyro may be referred, for this, together with the question of light versus heavy spools and handles, is still a hotly contested point among experts. The regulation maker's sizes of fine casting reels are No. 2, Small, No. 3, Medium and No. 4, Large, and the size most in popular favor for tournament work being the No. 3 with medium width spool.

One school of casters claims superiority for the reel with heavy spool and handle by reason that, after the spool is started, the momentum of the heavy spool, aided by the fly-wheel effect of the heavy handle, is so great it is not so easily stopped by the necessary pressure of the thumb in casting. They base their argument on the ground that there is always plenty of muscle handy to start the heavy spool, and toward the end of the cast, when the impetus of the casting weight is rapidly dying away, the heavy spool will keep on running and "feed" line without dragging back against the casting weight. (Sounds reasonable, don't it?). The other school insists upon the lightest possible form of construction for spool and handle—generally aluminum—claiming that the real point of excellence lies in the easy starting of the spool

which, by having less inertia or dead weight to overcome, starts quicker and requires less pressure of the thumb to control the cast.

They base their argument on the ground that a powerful cast, necessary with the heavy reel, is hard to control and that the harder pressure required more than offsets its greater impetus—also, at the end of the cast the spool runs so easily as to be no drag upon the line and requires hardly any “thumbing.” (Sounds reasonable, don’t it?)

I must confess that to me it appears very much like a case of “hoss and hoss” and the beginner is respectfully requested to try both and please himself—it is more than I have been able to do in many years.

I have tried all the standard makes of reels, both geared and “free-spool,” and in all manner of patterns, shapes and sizes without being able to reach a conclusion as to which reel was absolutely the best for distance casting. One word about the “free-spool,” however. While this reel is very desirable for fishing, when a light bait is to be cast, for distance casting it is, so far as I am concerned, absolutely out of it. As this is the “light spool” theory carried to the extreme it would seem to reflect credit upon the reel with the heavy spool, but extremes are seldom good arguments.

At the present time I am inclined to favor the full

PLATE VI



Bait Casting  
Position at end of Back Cast



jewelled No. 2 Talbot, with medium width heavy spool and heavy handle. This reel, by virtue of its perfect bearings, starts so easily as to allow the "light spool" claimants little ground for argument on that point.

Aluminum spools and handles are all right but I would advise against reels made wholly of aluminum for, unless great care is taken of them, the frame is too easily bent or twisted out of true. When you do get a good reel take good care of it. Remember it is a fine piece of mechanism and must not be neglected or abused if you expect it to serve you faithfully and well. Keep your reel clean, oil it occasionally and, when not in use, keep it in a leather box to protect it from injury, dirt and dust.

By cleaning a reel I do not mean to clean the *inside*—this is a job that had better be left to the maker of the reel or some expert repairer. The cleaning itself is quite easy, being a mere matter of a brush and a little benzine, but the assembling of the parts again is quite a piece of work and the amateur who takes his reel apart will generally have considerable difficulty in getting it so adjusted that it will run properly. In oiling a reel use only the best watch or clock oil you can get—a small vial will last for years—and remember that a reel should merely be *lubricated* and not *flooded*. If a reel is kept clean and protected from dust the only parts that will require at

all frequent oiling will be the end-bearings. To oil these simply unscrew the oil-caps, with which all good reels are fitted, and touch the bearings with a feather, quill or splinter of wood dipped in oil.

The lines used for bait casting in tournament events are of braided silk and exceedingly fine, some of them being veritable cobwebs. Both soft and hard braided lines are used but the general tendency is toward the soft braided line and of the smallest size obtainable. The soft braided line is not so apt to spring up in coils upon the spool as the hard braid and it runs out smoothly under the thumb. I have just perfected myself, after eighteen months' steady experimenting, a line which is far and away superior to anything else of the kind I have ever seen and I expect great results from it as it has jumped into instant favor among expert casters. As it takes a lot of these fine lines to fill up the spool it is customary to first wind the spool partly with string or heavier line before putting on the fine line. Some casters have the spools of their reels built up with cork or light wood, cemented with shellac to stand the water, and then turned perfectly round in a lathe. This makes a fine and satisfactory "backing" but is somewhat difficult to put on and is troublesome to remove if more line is needed on the spool. When using these fine lines

it is necessary to put on a "trace" or leader of heavy line to stand the first sharp thrash as the cast is started.

The trace should be long enough to give a foot or so of free line beyond the tip of the rod and extend back to and take several turns around the spool. The knot or splice should be made carefully and as small as possible—if reeled up on the extreme right of the spool it will give no trouble whatever in casting.

Do not put too much line on your reel—this is a common fault. The spool should be fairly full but not entirely so—leave about  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch of the spool-ends visible.

Always dry your line immediately after using or it will soon become sticky and rotten.

Get a good line-dryer—it will soon pay for itself in the saving of your lines.

The regulation tournament weights, called "plugs," are  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounces in weight.

They are cylindrical shaped pieces of wood, tipped with lead at one end, and their flight is steady and true. (See Rule IV of Western Rules.)

Those finished with white enamel will be found the best as their flight is more easily followed by the eye, especially in accuracy casting.

In overheard casting, tournament fashion, it is first

necessary to acquire the knack of starting your reel at high speed and to obtain control of the running reel, called "thumbing."

Both require considerable practise to develop to any degree of proficiency and the "thumbing" is seldom brought to perfection.

There are two widely different styles of casting—the "wrist cast" and the "body cast." We will take the more popular "wrist cast" first as it is the easier and more graceful of the two. Stand facing the direction in which the cast is to be made, with the right foot forward and the weight of the body evenly balanced on both feet. Grasp the rod firmly and hold it in such position that the reel will be turned to the left at an angle of about 45 degrees, with the handle, of course, on top. (See Plates 8 and 5.)

The first joint of the thumb should rest upon the rear pillar or cross bar of the reel, with the ball of the thumb pressing firmly upon the spooled line, and the side of the thumb just touching the left side of the spool. The "plug" should have a lead of about 18 inches beyond the end of the rod, although more or less lead is used according to preference. Extend the rod in front of you in an easy position, without stretching the arm to its full reach, and in a line with the direction in which the cast is to be

made. Raise the rod slowly, keeping it vertical as it passes over the shoulder, until the elbow is just above the level of your eyes. Stop the arm here and continue the motion with the forearm, bending the wrist backward until the rod reaches a position nearly level behind you. (See Plate 6.) In making this movement remember that the action of the *wrist* should be at the *end* of the movement—this is to swing the “plug” out behind in the proper position. Now the proper cast for distance is a sharp, quick, *driving* cast, so that the “plug” travels in as straight a line as possible and does *not* take a high, curving flight. There are three very good reasons for this: more power is applied in the *actual direction* of the cast—the “plug” offers the least possible resistance to an adverse wind and it has less line to drag after it.

To do this properly two motions are practically made at once—that is, to the forward motion of the rod is added, near the finish, a sharp inward and downward pull of the handle. This gives an extra sharp snap or “drive” to the cast and starts the “plug” like a bullet.

To begin the forward movement start the rod with an easy movement of the whole arm, quickly accelerating the motion until the rod is at an angle of about 45 degrees behind you, approaching the vertical.

At this point the fore-arm and wrist, acting together, whip the rod forward with all the power and "snap" possible. It is at this moment that the downward and pulling movement should be applied to the butt. In other words, the butt is really pulled in toward you a trifle, as it comes downward with the cast, and the handle does not go forward to the full extent of the reach, the effect being to spring the tip of the rod forward more sharply than if the hand described the full arc of the cast. It is practically the same motion as applied to the finish of the cast with the fly rod, only the pushing motion is left out. At the finish of the cast the rod should be extended straight in front of you, not quite at arm's length by reason of the butt being pulled in toward you, and at an angle slightly above the level. (See Plate 7.) We now come to the "thumping" of the reel, which is the hardest nut of all to crack, and here is where the beginner will have lots of fun with himself.

At the beginning of the forward motion of the rod the thumb must press upon the spool *hard* to guard against a premature starting of the reel. As the rod gathers speed going forward the pressure is relaxed just enough to let the reel start *slowly*. At the beginning of the second part of the cast—fore-arm and wrist—the pressure is still further relaxed and becomes gradually

lighter until, as the final "wrist snap" is given the thumb just barely touches the now flying spool.

Hold the rod steady, keep the joint of the thumb pressed against the rear pillar of the reel, gradually bending the tip of the thumb downward as the line runs from the spool. An easy pressure is absolutely necessary to obtain distance, so touch the spool as lightly as possible while the line is running out—just so you can feel it. Remember that the pressure of the thumb is *never entirely relaxed* and is hard at the start and light at the finish of a cast. Don't be discouraged if your first attempts seem bungling and your "plug" persists in diving into the water a few feet in front of you and don't "cuss" to any great extent if you are compelled, perforce, to spend much of your time picking out snarls and "rat-nests" from your reel. We have all "been there" and know it takes both patience and perseverance galore before one "gets the hang of it." This same "thumbing" of the reel is about the most difficult thing to learn I ever attempted and I have not mastered it yet, nor have I ever seen a caster who had perfect control of his reel at all times and who did not fetch up now and then with a "beaut" of a "rat-nest." The best plan to follow is to "go it easy" until you begin to catch the knack and then practise—practise—practise! Do not at-

tempt to cast but a few feet at first, gradually extending the distance as you become acquainted with your reel, until you are able to put all your power into the cast. A good way to practise "thumbing" and to observe the manner in which the line runs from the spool is, when casting, to forget all about your "plug" and *watch your reel*. After the first rush of the line you will be able to follow its action on the spool quite closely.

You will observe that as the pressure of the thumb is relaxed the line will have a tendency to spring up on the spool in a number of loose coils and, if the pressure be too light, to carry a loop around the spool the wrong way and instantly develop the caster's *bête noir*—the cursed "back-lash." When reeling in the line after a cast, hold the rod in the left hand—here is where the forward grasp on the handle comes in—so that the line may be held between the thumb and forefinger.

Keep a firm pressure upon the line and be careful to wind it evenly upon the spool and fairly tight. If the line is spooled on loose or unevenly you are courting certain disaster in the shape of the inevitable "back-lash."

Some casters endeavor to keep the line as dry as possible and this can be done to a considerable extent by holding the tip of the rod as high as possible when reeling in. If the thumb becomes sore or chafed on the end,

PLATE VII



Bait Casting  
Position at end of Cast



or the fingers of the left hand are cut by the line, try casting with a thumb-stall or finger-cot, made for the purpose and for sale at any good tackle store. Naturally, you lose a lot of "feel" in the thumb but I know of casters who use them without apparently, hurting their casting in the least.

The "body cast," a favorite with many Western casters, is generally made as follows. Stand a few feet from the edge of the platform with the left foot forward and the right foot well behind. Extend the rod in front to the full reach of the arm. Swing the rod back, holding the arm nearly stiff, and let the whole arm go well behind you. As the arm is swung back the shoulder is allowed to go back as far as it will go and the body inclined backward until the weight is shifted to the right foot. The tip of the rod is allowed to go a little lower behind you than in the "wrist cast" and, instead of being carried straight back, the rod is swung around behind you so that the tip will be a little to your left at the end of the backward motion.

In the forward motion the rod is swept forward almost at arm's length and the weight thrown *hard* with it. There is no "pulling" of the butt in this cast and the forward motion is completed by a sharp wrist-snap. At the finish of this cast the body will be thrown well for-

ward (often the right foot is carried along and swung ahead) and the rod extended to the full reach. As the rod is swung a little to the left in the backward movement, it goes a little to the right in the forward movement and does not pass straight over the shoulder.

It is really the overhead cast with a little of the side cast added and is tremendously powerful but difficult to control. Some casters make a skip, or even a few running steps, before starting the body cast, as a ball player usually does before attempting a long throw. There is practically no difference in the management of the reel except that it is started a little sooner and with less of a jerk, but the flight of the "plug" is much higher than in the "wrist cast."



## Bait Casting for Accuracy

In accuracy casting at targets it is best to use a moderately long rod—say from 6 to 6½ feet—and it should be fairly pliable. Here a great deal depends upon the nicety and ease of your casting and, especially at the close targets, your cast should be started gently in order to give you time to catch sight of the “plug” in the air and follow its flight with your eye. Hence the pliable rod, which requires less “elbow grease,” and is therefore more easily handled. Stand in an easy position with your weight evenly balanced on both feet. Point the tip of the rod straight at the target.

Raise the rod slowly and, as you do so, with the tip draw an imaginary vertical line up from the target and against the background. Keep your eyes fixed upon this line all the time and as you cast forward, which should be done smoothly and easily, bring the tip straight down the imaginary line. This will keep your cast straight in a line with the target and the distance is controlled by pressure upon the reel. With a little practise you will be surprised at the really wonderful accuracy which

can be attained as one can, after a while, place the "plug" practically wherever they have a mind to.

Watch the flight of your "plug" carefully (here is where the white enamelled ones come in) in order to gauge the distance of the cast.

It is well to stand a little back from the edge of the platform so that if you see a cast is likely to fall short of the target you can help out by stepping forward and extending the rod. If you over-cast the target, which is by far the safer way, you stop the cast, of course, by checking the reel so that the "plug" will drop at the right moment. Never check your reel suddenly, if you can possibly avoid it, as by doing so you are almost certain to cause your "plug" to kick back several feet by reason of the sudden jerk on the line.

It is better not to cast very high as it is then difficult to correctly gauge the distance, but cast as low as possible and, especially at the close targets, you will be able to tell almost exactly when to drop the "plug." Practise casting with as near the same motion and the same amount of speed each time—it will do much toward improving your average and teaching you to gauge the distance of the cast accurately.

If the event be held outdoors, you will have to allow for the wind, if there be any, and this will tax your cal-

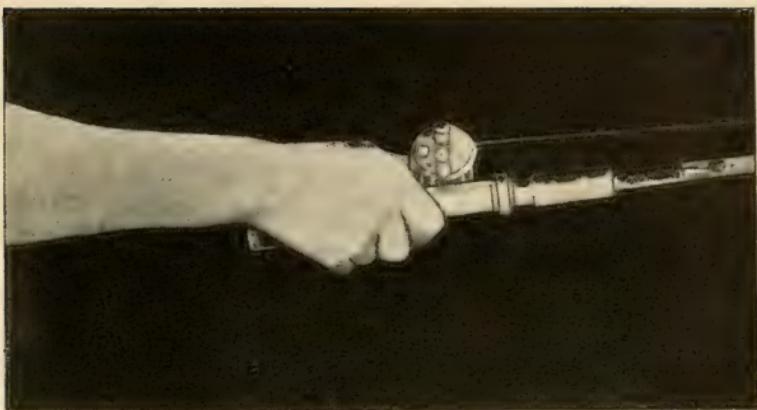
culation to the utmost. Should there be a cross wind, it is better to put a little more "speed" in the cast and *drive* the "plug" directly at the target, aiming a trifle to the side from which the wind blows.



## Bait Casting With the Slack Line

This is the famous English "Nottingham" cast and while we employ a different method the result is the same. It is seldom met with in this country outside of a few Eastern waters and is probably best known with us as the "Greenwood Lake" cast. The English method, which is generally used with long and heavy rods, is a two-handed cast made by swinging the body half-way around, holding the rod stiff at first and finishing the cast with the arms. The "Greenwood Lake" cast is quite different and is made with a heavy fly rod, swung over the shoulder, with a movement which is really a combination of a bait and fly casting motion. The rods should be from  $10\frac{1}{2}$  to  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet long and very stiff and powerful. The line, which is the most important part of this equipment, should be a soft enamel English line of small size and about 150 feet long. The line should be well worked and polished until it is as flexible and limber as possible, for everything depends upon it running out without kinking. The weight used is the regulation  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce casting weight, which is attached directly to the

PLATE VIII



Showing the Proper Grasp for the Bait Rod.

PLATE IX



Showing the Proper Grasp for the Fly Rod  
When Using the Long Handle.



line, no leader being used. The idea of this cast is one which is applicable for bait casting with a fly rod and using no reel. The "plug" should have a lead of from 10 to 15 feet of free line beyond the end of the rod and must be swung behind you until it strikes the water and be lifted therefrom at every cast.

First arrange your line upon the platform in the same manner as for fly casting.

Under the rules you are not allowed to really coil it upon the platform but if you are careful you can throw it in loose coils which will be nearly the same and work practically as well, barring kinks.

After rigging your rod and having the "plug" attached, twitch the "plug" out a few feet in front, swing it easily behind you and cast it about 30 feet away in front.

The best length of lead to use is about equal to your rod, so if you are using a 10-foot rod take note of some mark, if possible, about 20 feet away from you which will represent the combined length of your rod, and the free line in the lead. This mark is to guide you, when recovering line, as to the proper time to lift the "plug" from the water. Stand in the same position as for fly casting, holding the slack line in the left hand. Incline the body forward a little and extend the rod as far as you can reach

*easily.* Now begin to pull in slack with the left hand and, as the "plug" reaches the mark you have set, or at the distance you consider right, swing the rod easily backward, letting the arm and shoulder go as far back as you can without stretching (inclining the body backward at the same time) until the "plug" strikes the water behind you.

Generally you will hear it splash, but, if not, you can readily tell by the sudden stop of the pull on the rod.

The left hand, still holding the line *tightly*, should also be raised a little and crossed in front of the body.

At the *very instant* the "plug" strikes the water behind, begin the forward cast. Start the movement with a forward motion of the shoulder and, as soon as the dead weight is started (practically at once) swing the rod forward—straight over the shoulder—with all the force you can. As the rod reaches a vertical position, which should be as it passes over the shoulder, with the wrist and fore-arm give the sharpest and snappiest forward drive you possible can, carrying the motion forward to the full reach of the arm. *Just* as you finish the wrist-snap, let go of the slack line, hold the rod steady at an angle of about 25 degrees above the level, and, if it does not kink, your line should run out true.

As you throw the "plug" behind you preparatory to the forward cast, be careful to swing it back easily and smoothly so it will not jerk, the idea being to have the line extended as straight as possible behind so that as you begin the forward cast there will be no slack behind, and the "plug" be started instantly. To get it down fine you should really make the back cast and the forward cast all in one extended movement with no noticeable pause between.

Remember that the "plug" *must* strike the water in the back cast and be *raised therefrom* at each cast or it is a foul cast and does not score. When pulling in the line after a cast has been made, which should be done as fast as possible, remember to throw the line in as much of a coil as possible and don't have it lying every which way on the platform.

Don't forget that practically everything depends upon the smooth and even out-running of the line, and keep it as flexible and free from kinks as possible. The line should be dressed and cared for the same as the lines for fly casting, but extra pains should be taken to guard against kinks in this line.



## “Switch” or Roll Casting

This is, to my mind, the most interesting and fascinating of all tournament events, both to the caster and the spectator, and it is a pity that more of our casters do not take it up. Most every brook fisherman knows it in some form and often employs it to good advantage, at times when no other style of cast would be possible. Briefly, the idea of the “switch” cast is to make a forward cast with the fly without removing the line entirely from the water. It is done by drawing the rod slowly backward, leaving the line in the water, and continuing the backward motion until a loop of line is carried back about 15 to 20 feet behind you (Eastern Rules 15 feet—Western Rules 20 feet). The rod is then whipped sharply forward, the fly is drawn in toward you, turns behind and follows the line forward in a rapidly rolling loop upon the water.

The great fascination of this cast is in watching the long loop unroll upon itself in the water until, at the finish, the fly leaps lightly forward to the limit of the cast. The proper rods for this cast should be a little

lighter than those used in the "unlimited" fly casting events, and a trifle more pliable—say about 7 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ounces. The line, too, should be lighter and have a very long taper at both ends. An ordinary length of leader, about 9 feet, will generally work best as too long a leader will not "switch" forward well at the end of the roll. Arrange your line and stand as for fly casting, but near the left side of the platform in order to give the loop plenty of room to pass you on the right side. In these events it is customary to allow some one to draw out your line to a point not over 60 feet from the platform (See "Roll Casting" in Western Rules). If this is not allowed, draw out about 40 feet of line beyond the tip of the rod and start the cast easily, using the left hand if possible, as this style of casting is particularly severe upon both rod and caster. Hold the slack line in the left hand, but do not pull in as in fly casting. Extend the rod as far as you can reach and draw it back *slowly*, holding the rod, as it passes your shoulder, so that it will be inclined *slightly* to the right.

Continue the backward motion of the rod until the arm and shoulder are carried well back, accelerating the motion slightly toward the end, allowing the rod to go a little further back than in fly casting. This

will carry back quite a bit of line in the shape of a loop extending down from the tip of the rod behind you, forward across the platform and out into the water.

Start the forward movement of the rod rather slowly, quickly accelerating the motion as the rod nears the vertical, and finish the movement the same as for fly casting. At each forward movement of the rod the loop will be driven a little further forward in the water until the whole line is in motion and the fly will be drawn in, turn behind you and be carried forward to the length of the line. Now, if you started with the left hand, change the rod to the right hand and begin to extend the line by releasing a little of the slack line held in the left hand at each forward cast, but *not until* the loop has started forward. At each successive cast you will carry a little more line behind you in the loop until your line nearly strikes the barrier behind you and your forward loop will strike a little further out in the water.

Increase the power and snap of the rod motion with every cast until you feel you have the loop worked out nearly-as far as it will go. Then reach out with the rod a little further, draw the line back a trifle quicker, and, just as the loop has passed well behind,

bring your rod forward with all the power you can put into it. Continue the forward motion as far as you can reach, let go the slack with the left hand and allow the line to "shoot." As you swing the rod past you in the forward movement keep the tip inclined a trifle to the right so as to allow the loop plenty of room to pass—if you forget to do this you are likely to get a crack on the ear from the line that will make you remember it the next time. If you get your forward cast bungled up and the rolling movement of the line is stopped, don't try to thrash it out but pull in a little slack and start it over. When you have the rolling loop started in the water keep it moving as rapidly as possible and don't let it sink any deeper than you can help—if allowed to sink much you will find it very hard to drive forward. Watch the loop as it passes you on the backward movement and start the forward cast as soon as the loop has fairly passed behind. Don't worry about the barrier behind you—it will not effect the action of your loop to any extent even if you hit it—it is only to stop a straight overhead cast.



## Fly Casting for Accuracy

Up to and including the present time the conditions governing the events for this style of casting have been different at most all tournaments.

Generally speaking the targets to be cast at, vary in size and in distance from the platform, the first target being from 40 to 50 feet away, and the subsequent targets, usually three in number, being from 5 to 10 feet apart.

The Westerners generally use a target 30 inches in diameter (See "Distance and Accuracy Fly"—Western Rules) and a cast which strikes the target is considered *perfect*!

This hardly speaks well for the accuracy of their fly casters for such a target would be considered a veritable "cinch" by our Eastern casters. At the big Madison Square Garden tournaments the targets heretofore used in the accuracy events have been but 9 inches in diameter and yet scores have been made above 99 per cent perfect!

If the event be a combination of delicacy and ac-

curacy, one would proceed in much the same manner and with the same tackle as for fishing, so I will omit that part and speak of the events for accuracy only. In this we go about it a little differently and with different tackle.

Use a rod from 9 to 10 feet in length and fairly pliable, as most of the work is done by the wrist. Use as heavy a line as the rod will handle easily and with little or no taper.

The leader should be very heavy and not over 3 feet long—shorter if you are allowed to use it—and put on a good big fly. Stretch your leader well and see that it is absolutely straight.

In some tournaments you are allowed to make a few preparatory casts in the water to measure the distance and in others the casts must be made in the air, “dry fly” fashion, and the fly not allowed to touch the water. Whichever it is, do your best to gauge the distance exactly and catch the slack line in the left hand and hold it to mark the proper length of line.

Now by far the most accurate way is not to cast the fly out above the target and let it drop, which is the proceeding when delicacy counts, but to *roll* out the line so that the fly lands right slap on the target. With a heavy line, short heavy leader and large fly you

should, after a little practise, be able to send your line out as straight as a ram-rod and land your fly with a "spat" squarely on the target. As soon as you have estimated or measured the distance to the target as well as possible and marked the distance by grasping the slack line at the right point, recover your line smoothly and without jerking. Let the rod go back well behind you but keep the elbow low and do the work with the fore-arm and wrist. Drop the tip of the rod a little lower than usual on the back cast in order to get the loop in the line. As the back cast is started pull in with the left hand about two feet of slack line and hold it. Draw with the eye an imaginary vertical line up from the target and on the forward cast bring the rod straight down this line. Cast low, and at the finish of the cast hold the rod steady and pointed straight at the target. Just before the cast is fully extended let the left hand go forward with the line to the proper mark, but *do not release the line*.

This is done so that the line straightens out without any jerk, as it would if the distance were fully cast without the line being eased from behind. When you recover, reach out well with the rod and pull in slack again with the left hand, always holding the line at the same place. Of course, this is neither a

pretty nor delicate cast, as the heavy line turns the fly over with a "spat," but it is accuracy we are after and by casting in this way a caster with a true eye and steady hand can stand and whack the target in the center, cast after cast.

## Obstacle Fly Casting

These events, as the name implies, are those in which the caster has various obstacles opposed to him which effectually prevent a free and natural cast. The idea is, of course, to simulate as far as possible some of the difficult and trying situations in which the angler often finds himself when fishing, such as casting beneath a tree trunk leaning across a stream, under overhanging bushes, between rocks, snags, etc. It is intensely interesting work and requires great delicacy and precision in the handling of the rod and an extreme nicety of calculation.

As in the events for accuracy the conditions governing obstacle casting differ at various tournaments. Probably the three most popular forms of obstacle casting are for accuracy at a target fixed beneath an overhanging bush, for accuracy at a target fixed behind a cross-bar which is 4 feet above the water and for distance beneath a cross-bar fixed 30 feet from the caster and 6 feet above the water. For the first two events the best tackle is the same as described for ac-

curacy fly casting and the "rolling loop" is what does the business par excellence. First measure the distance as closely as possible by the preparatory casts, marking the distance by catching the slack line in the left hand as in accuracy casting. If you are allowed to do so by all means kneel on the platform and handle your rod as low as you can without making the motion awkward.

In all accuracy events use no more force in the cast than is required to fully extend the line, depending almost wholly upon the wrist—too much force will cause the line to "kick" and jerk back the fly in spite of the easing of the slack line. The same rule applies here about drawing with the eye an imaginary vertical line up from the center of the target and bringing the rod down this line on the forward cast. When casting at the target under the 4-foot bar go easy and be careful not to hit the bar. (See "Obstacle Fly Casting"—Western Rules.) In casting for distance under the 6-foot bar use a fairly pliable rod of about 6 ounces weight and from 9 to 9½ feet long. Use a moderate sized line with long front taper and a medium length leader. Kneel on the platform, if permitted, and keep the rod as low as possible. Extend the line to the bar, and when ready to cast under it, let the rod go behind on

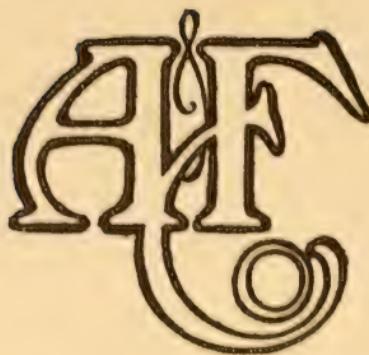
the back cast further than in any other style of casting—say at an angle of about 60 degrees from the vertical. When you start the forward cast, begin by pulling the handle of the rod forward, *without* starting the tip *upward* until the fore-arm is in a vertical position. Then finish the cast by a sharp forward drive of the rod by the fore-arm and wrist. In order to get a long cast beneath the bar the idea is, of course, to simulate as near as possible the low-rolling loop of the "switch-cast."

By allowing the rod to go so far back, and by the application of the peculiar butt motion in the forward cast, you are enabled to obtain a loop which will imitate the action of the "switch" to a remarkable degree.

It is the trickiest cast I know of and, to one who does not understand the cast, or who has not seen it done, the distances attained seem incredible.

## Selection of the equipment

Don't go about this hurriedly and don't jump to the conclusion that because "so-and-so" uses this or that kind of rod, reel, etc., that it must be the best. Tournament casting is truly a case of "many men of many minds" and that which may be the proper rig for one may be entirely unsuited to another, to say nothing of the different equipment necessary for and peculiar to the different styles of casting. I might add that my experience, not only as a caster, but in the manufacture of tournament "rigging," places me in a position to advise with authority, and I will be glad to assist any one desirous of taking up the sport —in either the selection of an equipment or its proper use.



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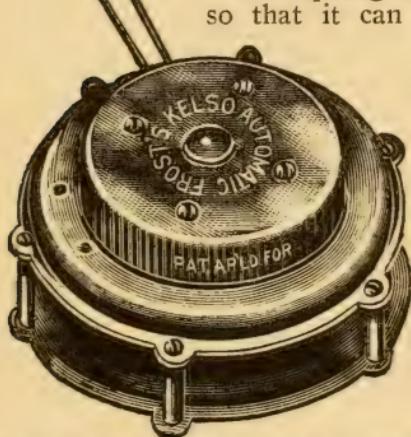
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brook trout fishing where the Line has to be shortened and lengthened so many times in fishing around brush, etc., and is indispensable in fly fishing. If an Angler once uses the Kelso Automatic Reel for fly casting he never will use any other Reel.

One of the great features of the Kelso is that a fish once hooked can never get any slack Line if the finger is kept on the brake controller. Of course the spring is not supposed to be strong enough to reel in a large fish of its own accord; the Rod is supposed to do this by raising the tip of the Rod (which brings up the Line) then letting it back again quickly, which gives the Reel the slack Line to take up, and this it will do before the fish can take it. In this way the fish can be brought in on the spring of the Rod, which gives him no chance for slack Line, or an opportunity of his getting too tight a Line; which gives him a chance to tear the hook out of his mouth.

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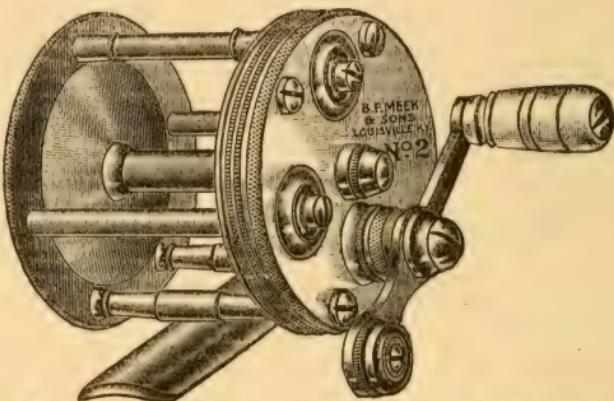
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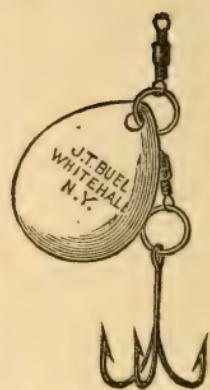
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